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ABSTRACT

The benefits of regional cooperation among small rural school districts are stressed in this brief description of the Educational Cooperative Service Unit (ECSU) currently serving 63,800 students in 104 member districts. A section on historical background traces the ECSU's forerunners, e.g., an educational media center established in 1965, the Title III educational service centers established in 1967, and the Educational Research Development Council organized in 1973 by school superintendents and funded by member districts. A section on present ECSU programs outlines administrative, instructional, media, and special education services. The administrative services described include assistance with long-range educational planning and shared computer systems; instructional services include inservice staff development programs and implementation of federally funded programs in local districts; media services include distribution of materials and equipment, centralized purchasing of school supplies and materials, and a print shop. ECSU's role as host for four special education cooperative centers is defined. (JH)

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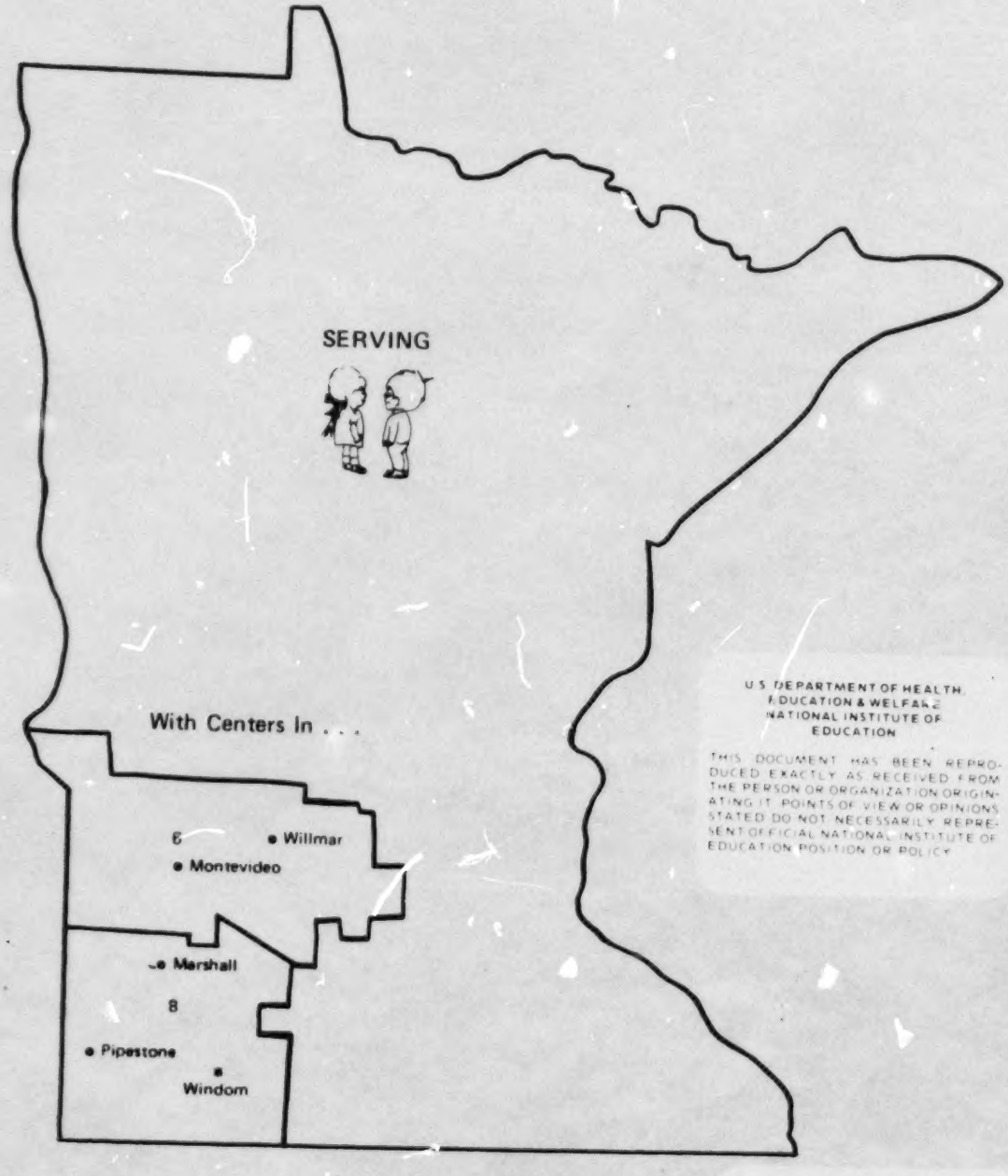


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# THE SW & WC

# PAST AND PRESENT

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SOUTHWEST AND WEST CENTRAL EDUCATIONAL COOPERATIVE SERVICE UNIT

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## THE PAST

--From Whence We Came--

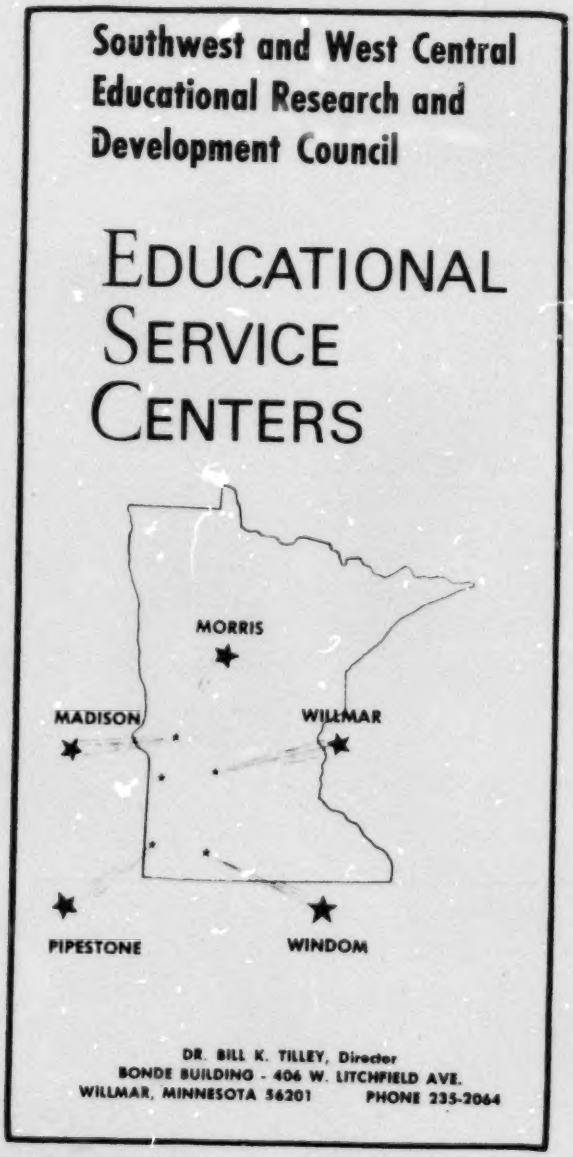
An adequate history of the Southwest and West Central Educational Cooperative Service Unit is difficult to piece together. The roots go deep into such spots as the Granite Falls Firehall, the Hotel Hunt in Montevideo, Cyrus Public Schools, the University of Minnesota at Morris and Southwest Minnesota State College in Marshall. The originators are also somewhat illusive, as are the personal contributions made to the effort by so many superintendents and others.

### THE ERDC

Events in 1965 pointed to the fact that regional cooperation among school districts was an idea which would be implemented and developed to form a concrete adjunct to the school system. During 1965 the Montevideo School District, under the direction of Superintendent Ralph Norland, submitted a Title III Project. This project provided for the establishment of an Educational Media Center which distributed audio visual materials such as 16 mm films, filmstrips, records, etc., to member schools. This EMC, as well as an electronic equipment repair shop and cooperative purchasing department, would become the Media Center of the later-formed ESA.

*Educational Media Center, Montevideo*

In October of that year, Superintendent Lowell Melbye of Willmar invited representatives of area schools within an approximate fifty mile radius to attend a conference. The conference was held to discuss the possibility of making application for a Title III Project to establish Educational Service Centers to provide supplemental educational services to area schools. It was this grant, which was received in 1967 by the ERDC, that formed the basis of special education service centers referred to today as special education cooperatives.




*Educational Service Centers Brochure*

A series of meetings beginning in Morris on June 14, 1965, culminated in the formation of the Southwest and West Central Educational Research Development Council (ERDC), the grandparent of ECSU.

On May 23, 1966, the ERDC held its first annual meeting in Marshall. It must be noted that the ERDC did not form as a result of any type of incentive monies but rather was independently organized by area school superintendents and others who saw a need for such a council. They were willing, without federal support, to develop among the several members a dues structure that would create and support such an organization. The foresight and willingness of these people to shoulder such an endeavor needs to be recognized.

The record shows that by May, 1966, the membership was as follows: Adrian, Appleton, Balaton, Belview, Benson, Brandon, Buffalo Lake, Canby, Chandler, Chokio, Clarkfield, Comfrey, Cottonwood, Cyrus, Danube, Evansville, Fulda, Glenwood, Granite Falls, Herman, Hoffman, Jackson, Jasper, Jeffers, Kerkhoven, Lake Wilson, Lakefield, Lamberton, Luverne, Madison, Magnolia, Marshall, Southwest Minnesota State College in Marshall, Milroy, Montevideo, Morgan, Morris, University of Minnesota at Morris, Odessa, Okabena, Olivia, Ortonville, Pipestone, Russell, Ruthton, Wabasso, Willmar, Willmar State Junior College, Windom, and Worthington. Later in 1966 the membership grew to 95 schools and colleges.

The following individuals comprised the 1966-67 Board of Directors: Supt. Richard Baker, President, Canby; Supt. Alex Fisher, Vice President, Fulda; Supt. L.A. Graves, Sec./Treasurer, Cyrus; Supt. B.L. Ailts, Danube; Supt. L.G. Blood, Benson; Supt. Jerome O. Webster, Windom; Supt. R.B. Clay, Dawson; Supt. R.M. Brynelson, Cottonwood; Supt. S.L. Held, Worthington; Supt. Abner Hegre, Buffalo Lake; and Supt. John Kleinsasser, Hoffman. The first administrators of the ERDC were Dr. R.F. Wollin, Executive Secretary; Dr. Charles Bruning, Associate Executive Secretary; and Bill Scarborough, Administrative Assistant.

ERDC Notes

Volume 1, Number 1

*Dr. Dick Wollin; York Flegel, Educational Service Center Coordinator; Bill Scarborough; and Dr. Charles Bruning*

The ERDC's three major purposes were to study the education needs of the area, to identify the priority of these needs, and to find ways to meet these needs and the means to implement solutions.

The three objectives which were paramount to the ERDC were:

1. To develop an organization which would improve all kinds of educational opportunities - academic, intellectual, vocational, cultural and social - in western Minnesota which would serve as a representative area of rural America;

2. To develop an organization which would identify the educational needs in western Minnesota through responsible research relating to the conditions for learning and educational opportunities available in this area;

3. To organize so that cooperative programs might be developed to improve educational opportunities in the area through utilization of all available educational agencies, including school system personnel, instructional programs, and mental health institutions.

## THE ESA

The ERDC continued until 1973 when legislation was passed which established a pilot educational service area in Southwest and West Central Minnesota.

The general purpose of the Southwest and West Central Educational Service Area (ESA), as stated in the special act creating the pilot program, was;

> ...to assist in meeting specific educational needs of children in participating school districts. The SW & WC ESA shall provide those educational programs and services which are determined to be priority needs of the regions. It shall assist in meeting special needs which arise from fundamental constraints upon individual school districts. It shall supplement the educational program of local school districts in these areas of special need or areas of low incidence of pupils and enrollments.

A petition by a majority of school districts in the Southwest and West Central ESA was submitted to the State Board of Education. Commissioner of Education Howard Casmey invited representatives of all districts to a general meeting in Montevideo on June 12, 1973. At this time a nomination committee was elected. At its direction, member school boards were requested to submit nominations for the board of directors. A slate of 24 candidates, 8 for each term of office - 3-year, 2-year, and 1-year - were nominated. Ballots were sent to all board members of SW & WC ESA school districts and returned to the Office of Planning and Development, State Department of Education. Ballots were counted and the following candidates were chosen:

3-year term

1. Rev. Harold Biederman, Renville
2. Mr. Duby Hanson, Granite Falls
3. Mr. D.T. Nelson, Canby
4. Mr. Lloyd Standafer, Worthington

2-year term

1. Mr. Clifton Blom, Milan
2. Mr. George Caspers, Clara City
3. Mr. William DeBates, Luverne
4. Dr. Harry Haugan, Montevideo

1-year term

1. Mr. Dennis Blomeke, Belview
2. Mrs. Pat Nelson, Tracy
3. Rev. Gordon O. Solomonson, Willmar
4. Mr. Robert Stearns, Hutchinson

The board of directors held its first organizational meeting on July 18, 1973. The ESA replaced the ERDC structure, and the assets of the ERDC were transferred to the ESA. Dr. Dick Wollin was selected as executive secretary, and the ERDC Board of Directors became the ESA Superintendents' Advisory Council.

# A Report to the Minnesota State Legislature

educational service area

*Pilot ESA Reports*

THE ECSU

In February of 1976, the legislature enacted a bill authorizing the establishment of ten regional units to be called Educational Cooperative Service Units (ECSUs). The purpose of the ECSU is to perform educational planning on a regional basis and to assist in meeting children's specific educational needs which may be better provided for by an ECSU than by the districts themselves.

The initial organization of each ECSU may occur only upon petition to the State Board of Education by a majority of all school districts in an ECSU region. The care, management, and control of an ECSU is vested in a board of directors. Members of the ECSU Board of Directors must be current members of school boards of participating school districts. Programs offered by an ECSU must be limited to those requested by the member schools.

At the May 20, 1976, annual meeting held in Marshall, the ESA was formally changed to the Southwest and West Central ECSU. The first Board of Directors was:

Jim Fellows, Worthington-Chairman
Harry Haugan, Montevideo-Vice Chairman
Keith Williams, Okabena-Clerk
Paul Skogrand, Milan-Treasurer
Earl Bauman, Kerkhoven
Dwane Bucklin, Buffalo Lake
Richard Byers, Westbrook
John Hassinger, Hutchinson
Russell Miller, Maynard
Art Olson, Marshall
Connie Roemer, Tracy
Ron Boyenga, Ellsworth

The first ECSU Advisory Council members were:

Phyllis Fredlund, Clarkfield-Chairman
Bernie Ailts, Canby
Jerry Bouchie, Adrian
Wanda Hixon, Spicer
Ione Kleven, Milan
Charles Kyte, Storden-Jeffers
Marjorie Lindholm, Ortonville
Jane Preusse, Redwood Falls
Marlys Simpson, Lynd
Al Swanson, Worthington
Jean Wallukait, Ellsworth
Sister Michon Welsh, New Ulm Diocese
John West, Ivanhoe
Marcella Angus, Willmar
Art Christle, Bird Island
Terry Frazee, Marietta
Kent Nelson, Walnut Grove

The first Superintendents' Advisory Council members were:

Lowell Melbye, Willmar-Chairman
Miles Miller, Lakefield-Vice Chairman
Milton Anderson, Maynard
Burt Barnard, Pipestone
Gordon LeBoutillier, Storden-Jeffers
Virgil Likness, Madison
Tom Lykins, Redwood Falls
Bill Scarborough, U of M, Morris
Wallace Schoeb, Echo-Wood Lake
Fred Switzer, Morris
Lowell Tornquist, SSU, Marshall
H.O. Volden, Ruthton
Ran Fisher, Buffalo Lake
Bob Hanson, Slayton
John Kleinsasser, Hoffman
Sister Mary Gen Olin, New Ulm Diocese
Duane Rafteseth, Grove City

## THE PRESENT

--For All The Children--

The Southwest and West Central Educational Cooperative Service Unit currently serves 85 regular member school districts within the boundaries of the Governor's Planning Regions 6E, 6W, and 8. In addition, the Unit has six associate members which are public schools outside of the boundaries of the Unit and fourteen non-public school members for a combined total of one-hundred four ECSU member school districts. The student enrollment of the member schools is 63,800. The districts employ 3,800 teachers, 300 administrators, and 560 school board members. The primary region served within the boundaries of Regions 6E, 6W, and 8 is 12,500 square miles.

The ECSU offices are located at Southwest State University in Marshall, Minnesota, with satellite centers for special education in Montevideo, Pipestone, Willmar, and Windom. In addition, the Educational Media Center and central purchasing warehouse are located in Montevideo.

The four major divisions of ECSU programs and services are Administrative Services, Instructional Services, Media Services, and Special Education Services.

### ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The Educational Planning Service is a component of Administrative Services. It was funded by the 1979 Legislature in response to a need that school districts had voiced for assistance in continuing the Educational Planning Task Force (EPTF) and the Planning, Evaluating and Reporting (PER) processes in their school districts. Legislation calls for the planning staff in the ECSUs to establish a common data base and to perform long-range planning. The Planning Service is available to member school districts upon request to assist them with local district planning needs.

The Minnesota Educational Computing Consortium - Management Information Systems (MECC-MIS) was established as the vehicle by which all school districts in Minnesota would share a common computer system for reporting financial information as required by the Legislature and for providing other computing services as requested by the local school districts themselves.

The ECSU serves as a host for the southwest and west central region for this project. The major computer services offered are in the areas of finance, personnel/payroll, and student services. In addition, MECC-MIS offers the services of a Regional Accounting Coordinator to assist school districts in uniform financial accounting and reporting systems (UFARS).

*Management Information Systems Computer Room*

INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

Individually Guided Education (IGE) originated as a Title III Project in 1970 and continues today as a program financed by the school districts which participate. IGE is a school improvement process which has seven major components: 1) continuing research and development, 2) multiunit school organization, 3) instructional programming model, 4) assessment and evaluation, 5) curriculum materials, 6) home-school-community relations, and 7) facilitative environments.

Inservice programs for staff development are formulated based on request. One example is the annual Common Inservice Day, which is attended by more than 2,500 area teachers and administrators each November.

The Minnesota Information Network for Educators (MINE) is a research service using ERIC and other resources. A teacher or administrator can request information on a specific educational topic or curriculum. The information retrieved through the search will be sent to the individual on hard copy or microfiche.

Through the years a number of federally-funded projects, such as Title IV-C and Title III, have been evaluated and proved to be effective. The Statewide Facilitator Project, or the National Diffusion Network, is the program which makes these "validated" projects available to school districts in our area. The Statewide Facilitator matches proved exemplary projects with locally-identified school district needs and assists the districts in replicating appropriate programs locally. The replication may involve a small grant or may consist only of on-site training with access to appropriate materials.

Literally hundreds of inservice experiences are made available to teachers in local school districts each year through this project, in addition to the full replication projects that are installed in school districts.

The Laubach Method of instruction is used in the Adult Right-to-Read Project, which is hosted by the ECSU. The major thrust of the project is to identify, train and coordinate a network of volunteer tutors who work one-to-one with adults who need reading instruction. Confidentiality is maintained for all adults who participate in the program.

The Southwest and West Central Teacher Center is a three-year, federally-funded project designed to assess needs for inservice programs and to implement effective programs to meet the identified needs of the 3,800 teachers in Regions 6 and 8. The Center will also be a major catalyst in the areas of curriculum development and educational research. Teacher Center resources are focused on reaching out to teachers where they work.

Nutrition Education and Training (NET) is a federally-funded program developed by the Minnesota Department of Education. The purpose of the NET Program is to provide children (preschool through grade twelve) with effective nutrition learning opportunities to help the children develop attitudes and practices that establish and maintain good nutritional health. The nutrition concept will be integrated into the curriculum of licensed day-care programs and public and private elementary and secondary schools.

The Southwest and West Central Career Education Program is funded through the Federal Career Education Incentive Act (P.L. 95-207). The purpose of the Career Education Program is to facilitate counselor and teacher use of career education materials in existing curriculum and resource formats and to increase communication on career education needs among business, labor, industry, government, educators, and parents, as well as students.

The 1979 State Legislature established a Basic Skills Program to provide leadership, technical assistance, and training in basic skills instruction on a regional basis to school districts and non-public schools. The basic skills have been defined in the legislation as reading, writing, listening, speaking, and computation. The ECSU hosts the basic skills project in cooperation with the State Department of Education.

A number of instructional programs and services have been offered over the years through federal grants such as Title III and Title IV-C and state grants such as the Council on Quality Education (CQE). These grants have enabled the ECSU to respond to the needs of the school districts with programs like Talents Unlimited, CQE Sharing Staff Project, Preschool Right-to-Read, and the School-Community Planning Project.

## MEDIA SERVICES

Under the general heading of Media Services come all of those programs and services that are hosted by the Educational Media Center located in Montevideo. There are actually six major departments in the Media Center, all of which are considered part of Media Services.

The major service hosted by the Media Center is that of Film and Media Distribution. Over 60 school districts participate in this service which delivers materials to each school by van. Materials available to the member schools include 5,156 16mm films; 543 filmstrips; 750 sound filmstrips; 625 loop films; and 3,708 other items.

*Film Library, Media Service*

Central Purchasing enables school districts to take advantage of large quantity discounts on school supplies and materials. Paper, audio visual equipment and supplies, janitorial supplies, and food products are all available through Central Purchasing and are delivered to the individual school districts by the Media Center.

*Cooperative Purchasing*

Cost savings to school districts are realized through the reduced prices on the goods and the reduced burden of bidding procedures and paperwork with individual vendors.

The Electronic Equipment Repair Shop repairs items transported from school districts by way of the van. Examples of equipment repaired through this service are 16mm projectors, record players, overhead projectors, and slide projectors.

*Electronic Equipment Repair Service*

Service to on-site equipment, such as computer terminals (CRTs), teletypes, and high speed printers, is provided under a maintenance contract by a technician who travels to the school districts.

A Print Service is available to school districts through the Print Shop located at the Educational Media Center. Forms, report cards, brochures, newsletters, and other materials are printed for school districts. Materials are transported between the Print Shop and school districts by way of the van service.

*Print Service*

Driver Education materials and equipment are administered by the Media Center. A multi-media system for classroom use and a 16-place driver education simulator are available to districts at a rental price that supports maintenance cost and underwrites the eventual replacement of equipment.

The sixth service offered by the Educational Media Center is that of a Right-to-Read Instructional Materials Center. Low-cost instructional materials and games are printed, manufactured, and sold to school districts at minimal rates. All materials and games are coded and keyed to the major textbooks and programs.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

The ECSU hosts four special education cooperative centers located in Montevideo, Pipestone, Willmar, and Windom. Each special education center has a director of special education and staff members designated by the member school districts. The special education center is guided by and responsive to a superintendents' council made up of the superintendents from the member school districts. Each center is autonomous in that it determines its own needs or programs and services, and the ECSU responds by providing what is requested. As the host, the ECSU provides the administrative framework for the operation of the centers and the necessary support in terms of policies, procedures, and operations, allowing the superintendents to concentrate on programs and services and fiscal matters which directly impact their school districts.

The ECSU also hosts region-wide special education services. The Special Education Regional Consultant (SERC) is available to assist directors of special education and local school districts. The SERC administers the 94-142 Discretionary Project, the Preschool Incentive Project, and the Special Educational Instructional Materials Center (SEIMC).

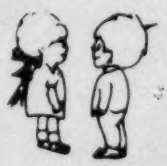
*Special Education Instructional Materials Center (SEIMC)*

## THE FUTURE

### --What Does It Hold?--

Although educational futurists have made predictions about the elementary and secondary educational systems, no one really knows what the future will hold for local school districts and the children they serve. Projections range from programs beamed from satellites, teaching children in the home by way of computers, microwave systems that beam both audio and video between school districts and between the school and the home, underground schools or no schools at all, to further consolidation or the breakup of school districts and the return of the one-room rural school. No one really knows what the next twenty or thirty years hold for elementary and secondary schools. One certainty is that whatever the future brings, educators in the school districts in Southwest and West Central Minnesota will assume a leadership position and will step forward to bring greater educational opportunities to their students.

Schools in the southwest and west central part of the state have demonstrated again and again a colleagial relationship which transcends district boundaries and interschool rivalries. One can predict, based on the record of the past, that the schools in Southwest and West Central Minnesota will continue to share and cooperate and work together in whatever way necessary to ensure their students the finest educational program possible.



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TERRY FRAZEE - Marietta
PHYLLIS FREDLUND - Clarkfield
BRUCE GOVIG - Benson
SISTER ELAINE GUERBER - New Ulm Diocese
WANDA HIXON - New London/Spicer
IONE KLEVEN - Milan
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MARJORIE LINDHOLM - Ortonville
DENNIS LITFIN - Moutain Lake
KENT NELSON - Walnut Grove
JANE PREUSSE - Redwood Falls
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MARLYS SIMPSON - Lynd
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PAUL SKOGRAND - Montevideo
RICHARD VROMAN - Milroy
KEITH WILLIAMS - Heron Lake/Okabena

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VIC CLARK - Brooten
VERLE CONNER - Atwater
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IVAN ECKSTROM - Renville
RAN FISHER - Buffalo Lake
CHET FLACK - Granite Falls
WILLIAM FREITAG - Chandler/Lake Wilson
ROBERT HANSON - Slayton
JOHN KLEINSASSER - Hoffman
O.L. LAROWE - Clara City
GORDON LEBOUTILLIER - Storden-Jeffers
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WALLACE SCHOEB - Fulda
CORNELIUS SMIT - Wood Lake
FRED SWITZER - Morris
DON A. TORBENSON - Paynesville
LOWELL TORNQUIST - Southwest State University
HERMAN O. VOLDEN - Ruthton
DARROLD WILLIAMS - Tracy

## ECSU MEMBER SCHOOLS

### REGION 6E

Atwater
Bird Island
Brownton
Buffalo Lake
Cosmos
Danube
Eden Valley-
Watkins
Fairfax
Franklin
Grove City
Hector
Hutchinson
Lester Prairie
Morton
New London-
Spicer
Olivia
Raymond
Renville
Sacred Heart
Silver Lake
Willmar

### REGION 6W

Appleton
Beardsley
Bellingham
Benson
Canby
Clara City
Clarkfield
Clinton
Dawson
Echo
Graceville
Granite Falls
Kerkhoven-Murdock-
Sunburg
Madison
Marietta
Maynard
Milan
Montevideo
Ortonville
Wood Lake

### REGION 8N

Balaton
Belview
Cottonwood
Hendricks
Ivanhoe
Lake Benton
Lamberton
Lynd
Marshall
Milroy
Minneota
Morgan
Redwood Falls
Russell
Ruthton
Sanborn
Tracy
Tyler
Verdi
Wabasso
Walnut Grove

### REGION 8S

Adrian
Brewster
Chandler-
Lake Wilson
Edgerton
Ellsworth
Fulda
Heron Lake-Okabena
Hills-
Beaver Creek
Jackson
Jasper
Lakefield
Luverne
Magnolia
Mountain Lake
Pipestone
Round Lake
Sioux Valley-
Lake Park
Slayton
Storden-Jeffers
Westbrook
Windom
Worthington

## ECSU ASSOCIATE SCHOOLS

Central Christian School, Prinsburg
Holy Redeemer, Marshall
St. Aloysious, Olivia
St. Anne, Wabasso
St. Edward, Minneota
St. Eloi, Ghent
St. Mary, Bird Island
St. Mary, Tracy
St. Michael, Madison
St. Philip, Litchfield
St. Leo, St. Leo

St. Andrew, Fairfax
St. Mary, Worthington
St. Michael, Morgan
Belgrade
Brooten
Butterfield
Comfrey
New Ulm Diocese
Paynesville
Springfield